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ABSTRACT

Teaching tolerance and appreciation for diversity becomes more important as changing demographics require schools to prepare students for increasing diversity. Teachers can help students develop more positive racial attitudes through instructional interventions. However, it is important to implement experiences designed to influence educators' perceptions and racial feelings in order for them to successfully modify students' racial attitudes. How teachers present lessons significantly influences how students view content. Teachers must model the positive attitudes they expect in students. Those who prepare teachers have a responsibility to model exemplary practices. A strong belief in the values of the American Creed offers hope for closing the gap between expressed democratic ideals and realities of American society. Teaching democratic values can reduce student prejudice and promote positive attitudes toward tolerance, respect, and cultural appreciation. Students show less prejudice when they are able to think critically, reason at high levels, and have flexible perspectives. Participation in cooperative learning activities helps students choose friends from outside racial groups and develop more positive racial attitudes. The paper presents a cooperative learning jigsaw activity, which requires active participation by five group members, to familiarize educators with research findings on prejudice reduction. Each member receives a different clue sheet, and clues from the five sheets are shared among group members in order to identify 14 research-based strategies for prejudice reduction in the classroom. (Contains 21 references.) (SM)

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Teaching Tolerance and Appreciation for Diversity:

Applying the Research on Prejudice Reduction

by

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Values which are learned in early childhood, are shaped and solidified in adolescence. By the age of three, young children are aware of racial differences (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). Prejudice and discrimination toward those who are different usually appear first in the middle grades. Basic education represents a wonderful window of opportunity to instill values which will reduce prejudice and prepare students for responsible citizenship (Allen & Stevens, 1994). In the near future, teaching tolerance and appreciation for diversity will take on even greater importance as changing demographics require us to prepare students for life in a society which will become increasingly diverse.

Research reveals that the racial attitudes of young children mirror those of adults (Cross, 1991). Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1950) identified White bias, a tendency for young children to prefer white to brown dolls. White bias reflects accurately the attitudinal norms of American society. White children, beginning at age four, make own-group racial preferences. Mexican American and African American children make both out-group and own-group preferences (Banks, 1994a).

Research also demonstrates that teachers can help their students to develop more positive racial attitudes through instructional interventions. White bias can be reduced but not eliminated through positive reinforcement of students when they choose positive adjectives to describe brown figures (Williams & Edwards, 1969). Recognizing difference among the faces of minority group members, which allows students to view minorities as individual human beings rather than members of a group, increases interracial contact and is effective in reducing prejudice (Katz & Zalk, 1978). Studies by Stephan (1985) reported that students who engaged in role play activities of racially different persons developed more positive racial attitudes. Research by Rubin (1967) indicates that increases in self-acceptance for an individual are associated with a reduction in prejudice.

Curricular interventions also hold great promise for developing positive racial attitudes in students. A study by Yawkey (1973) demonstrated the positive effects of selected multiethnic social studies readings on the attitudes of White children toward African Americans. Classroom reading materials that are multiethnic have helped White children to develop more positive racial attitudes (Litcher & Johnson, 1969). Experimental research by Shirley (1988) found that integrating multicultural activities into English, social studies, and reading curricula had a positive effect on the racial attitudes of racially integrated students in fifth- and sixth-grade classes. Reading and discussing stories about Native Americans was found to have a positive effect on the racial attitudes of fifth grade students (Fisher, 1965). Although the results of curriculum-intervention studies have been inconsistent, they have demonstrated that the positive portrayal of diverse

groups of people in the school curriculum can have a positive effect on students.

Banks (1994b) believes that experiences designed to influence the perceptions and racial feelings of educators must be implemented in order for them to modify the racial attitudes of their students successfully. The perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes of educators have a profound effect on the climate of the school and on the attitudes of students. Because the way in which teachers present lessons has a strong influence on how content is viewed by students, teachers are much more important in the learning process than the materials which they use. In order to create a school atmosphere conducive to the success of all students, educators must be strongly committed to the ideal of respect for diversity.

Research strongly suggests that, for both student and teacher learning, the way in which one is taught has a much stronger influence on learning than what is said. The day-to-day interaction of teachers and their students is at the heart of the matter. Emphasis on teacher knowledge and teacher skills will have little effect without caring teachers who expect and demand the very best from themselves and from each and every one of their students (Vaughan, 1996). Teachers must model the positive attitudes they expect in their students, and those who prepare teachers have an even greater responsibility to model exemplary practice.

Manning and Baruth (1996) emphasize the importance of teacher knowledge, attitudes, and skills which work together in the classroom learning environment. Teachers need to understand the implications of social class, culture, ethnicity, and race for the learning process; and they need to understand culturally different learners so that they can deliver instruction which is developmentally and culturally appropriate. Teachers can develop more positive attitudes toward diversity through participation in professional development activities and through interaction with people from diverse backgrounds. Cross cultural communication skills are extremely important for teachers when they are interacting with students and parents from various ethnic groups, races, social classes, and cultures. Teacher knowledge, attitudes, and skills interact in the classroom to enhance academic achievement and to instill egalitarian attitudes and democratic values.

Democratic values such as human rights, freedom, equality, justice, and dignity for all people make up what Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal (1944) identified as the American Creed. These are the overarching national idealized values which unify American society. American Creed values are embodied in our great national documents, the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. They provide a vision both for individual

freedom and for the common good, the framework for our national belief system, and they are central to our future as a nation. Myrdal believed that the "American Dilemma," the existing gap between American democratic ideals and the realities of a stratified American society, was the force driving Americans toward a society which reflects freedom, equality, justice, and human dignity. If internalized by students, American Creed values will continue to unify Americans from vastly different backgrounds and can stimulate continued progress toward social justice. A strong belief in American Creed values offers the best hope for closing the gap between our expressed democratic ideals and the realities of American society.

Teaching the democratic values embodied in our great national documents can reduce student prejudice and promote positive student attitudes toward tolerance, respect, and appreciation of difference. These American Creed beliefs in freedom, equality, justice, and human dignity are a key to prejudice reduction and to the realization of the vision for America articulated by the framers of our Constitution. Democratic values, which affect the American social conscience, have the greatest potential for the reduction of discrimination and prejudice. In addition to instilling democratic values, other teaching strategies also are effective for teaching positive attitudes toward racial difference.

Kirschenbaum (1994) identifies four strategies for teaching values. As well as teaching about values, teachers can demonstrate good values, teach skills for acting ethically and morally, and encourage young people to internalize values and make their own good decisions. Teachers, as good role models, who set positive examples and share their democratic convictions can have a positive effect on their students. Skills include how to resist peer pressure, maintain self-respect, resolve conflicts in nonviolent ways, and stand up for what one believes in. By giving students opportunities to make choices and to respond to moral issues, teachers allow students to apply the principles which they are learning. When developing strategies for character education, Kirschenbaum cautions that educators need to teach values in conjunction with parents and the larger community.

James Banks (1994a) believes that teachers and students should support and defend moral and ethical positions that are consistent with democratic values. Banks found that students show less prejudice when they are able to think critically and reason at high levels. He recommends teaching strategies which are personalized, interactive, cooperative, and involvement oriented. When teaching multicultural content, an area where a variety of different perspectives is valued, he views teacher-centered instruction as especially inappropriate. To teach democratic values effectively, the voices of all students must be heard and legitimized in order to foster a spirit of cooperative interdependence.

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Perspective taking and empathy exercises help students to develop flexibility of perspective, a crucial trait of the multicultural sensibility. Students who begin to feel empathy are well on their way toward respecting diverse viewpoints and, thereby, becoming less prejudiced and self-centered. Research by Byrnes (1988) suggests that activities and materials with a strong affective component, which invite students to enter vicariously into the lives of people from different ethnic groups, help develop this flexibility of perspective. With perspective taking, seeing things through the hearts, minds, and eyes of others, students come to the realization that while people may view things differently, they also share similar wants and needs.

For students to attain flexibility of perspective, which is a habit of mind, empathy and perspective taking exercises should be integrated throughout the curriculum. These exercises are most common in the social studies, where teachers routinely might ask their students to put themselves in the places of various players in history. Perspective taking need not be used only in social studies with reference to individuals or cultural groups, however. In science, the teacher might ask the students to play the roles of electrons, protons, and neutrons as they act out the activity inside an atom. Teachers in math might encourage their students to view geometric figures from various angles. These brief exercises in math and science, in addition to reinforcing the skill of perspective taking, incorporate tactile-kinesthetic learning as well (Grant & Gomez, 1996).

In any subject area cooperative learning groups can be effective. Participation in cooperative learning activities, which also has a positive effect on the academic achievement of girls and students of color, helps Mexican American, African American, and White children to choose more friends from outside racial groups and to develop more positive racial attitudes (Banks, 1994a). Among diverse student participants in cooperative learning Slavin (1990) found more interaction, greater mutual concern, and acceptance of students with disabilities.

The following cooperative learning jigsaw activity, which requires the active participation of five group members, is designed to familiarize educators with the research findings on prejudice reduction. Each group member receives a different clue sheet, and clues from the five clue sheets must be shared among group members in order to identify fourteen research-based strategies for prejudice reduction in the classroom.

Dr. Dale Titus

PREJUDICE REDUCTION JIGSAW

Clue Sheet 1

Each of the five clue sheets has different clues for ways to reduce student prejudice. Share your clues and work together to identify 14 research-based strategies for prejudice reduction.

1. Banks (1994) found that students show less prejudice when they are able to reason at a high level and use this kind of thinking.

2. This word has three syllables.

3. This phrase has two words of 4 & 4 letters.

   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

4. This phrase has three words of 8, 11, & 10 letters.

   _

5. The two words begin with w & b and end in e & s.

6. The words have 4, 4, & 4 syllables.

7. When engaged in these, students are learning actively about many cultures.

8. When this is communicated clearly, consistently, and sincerely for all students, attitudes toward diversity can be improved.

9. To achieve this state, individuals must understand their own personal and cultural values and recognize who they are.

10. This phrase has two words of 6 & 15 letters.

    _

11. The two words begin with d & v and end in e & s.

12. The words have 4, 1, & 2 syllables.

13. This morally and ethically perplexing situation is caused by the gap between social realities and democratic ideals in the United States.

14. Slavin (1990) found among diverse student participants in this activity more interaction, greater mutual concern, and acceptance of students with disabilities.

Dr. Dale Titus

PREJUDICE REDUCTION JIGSAW

Clue Sheet 2

Each of the five clue sheets has different clues for ways to reduce student prejudice. Share your clues and work together to identify 14 research-based strategies for prejudice reduction.

1. This word has three syllables.

2. This word has seven letters.

   _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. The two words begin with r & p and end in e & y.

4. Fisher (1965) and Yawkey (1973) found that reading this material improved student attitudes toward people from many different ethnic groups.

5. This phrase has two words of 5 & 4 letters.

   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

6. The three words begin with m, c, & m and end in c, m, & s.

7. The words have 5 & 4 syllables.

8. When teachers express this to their students, it correlates consistently with greater achievement for all students.

9. This hyphenated phrase has two words of 4 & 10 letters.

   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

10. Katz and Zalk (1978) discovered that this recognition activity reduced prejudice and increased interracial contact.

11. This phrase has two words of 10 & 6 letters.

    _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

12. The three words begin with a, c, & v and end in n, d, & s.

13. The words have 4 & 3 syllables.

14. This occurs when students in a heterogeneous group work together as a team to accomplish group goals.

Dr. Dale Titus

PREJUDICE REDUCTION JIGSAW

Clue Sheet 3

Each of the five clue sheets has different clues for ways to reduce student prejudice. Share your clues and work together to identify 14 research-based strategies for prejudice reduction.

1. This word has eight letters.

   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

2. This feeling allows the projection of one's own personality into the personality of another person in order to better understand how another person feels.

3. Each word has just one syllable.

4. This portrays diverse people as good exemplars; and it can serve as a window or as a mirror for students as they read it.

5. Williams and Edwards (1969) reduced this form of prejudice by giving positive reinforcement to students who used positive adjectives to describe brown figures.

6. This phrase has three words of 11, 10, & 9 letters.

   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

7. The two words begin with m & a and end in l & s.

8. The words have 1 & 4 syllables.

9. The two words begin with s & a and end in f & e.

10. This helps students to identify people from outside racial groups by their physical appearance as unique individuals rather than as group stereotypes.

11. Banks (1994) believes that students become more tolerant of diversity when required to defend their beliefs by relating them to these.

12. This phrase has three words of 8, 5 , & 6 letters.

    _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

13. The two words begin with a & d and end in n & a.

14. The words have 5 & 2 syllables.

PREJUDICE REDUCTION JIGSAW

Clue Sheet 4

Each of the five clue sheets has different clues for ways to reduce student prejudice. Share your clues and work together to identify 14 research-based strategies for prejudice reduction.

1. This type of thinking requires higher order thinking skills.

2. This word begins with e and ends in y.

3. Studies by Stephan (1985) reported that students who engaged in this activity developed more positive racial attitudes.

4. The words have 3, 4, & 4 syllables.

5. This type of prejudice, which favors the dominant group, was first identified by the Clarks (1950) among most American children.

6. Litcher and Johnson (1969) discovered that white elementary students, after using these in school, had more positive attitudes toward people of color.

7. This phrase has two words of 13 & 10 letters.

_ _

8. The two words begin with h & e and end in h & s.

9. The words have 1 & 3 syllables.

10. The words have 2 & 6 syllables.

11. These beliefs advocate majority rule with the rights of groups and individuals protected and respected.

12. Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal (1944) identified these as equality, justice, freedom, and dignity.

13. This phrase has two words of 8 & 7 letters.

_ _

14. The two words begin with c & l and end in e & g.

Dr. Dale Titus

PREJUDICE REDUCTION JIGSAW

Clue Sheet 5

Each of the five clue sheets has different clues for ways to reduce student prejudice. Share your clues and work together to identify 14 research-based strategies for prejudice reduction.

1. This word begins with c and ends in l.

2. Research reported by Byrnes (1988) revealed that children who enter vicariously into the lives of people of different ethnic groups tend to develop a flexibility of perspective and this feeling.

3. This activity requires students to put themselves in the place of another person and to act their part.

4. The three words begin with p, m, & l and end in e, e, & e.

5. The words have 1 & 2 syllables.

6. When using these, teachers should emphasize their meaning and the commonalities among groups representing many cultures.

7. Shirley (1988) reported that these affected student attitudes toward diversity in a positive way.

8. This phrase has two words of 4 & 12 letters.

_____ _____

9. Research by Rubin (1967) indicates that increases in this for an individual are associated with a reduction in prejudice.

10. The two words begin with f & d and end in l & n.

11. The two words have 4 & 2 syllables.

12. These come from our great national documents and tend to unify our society.

13. Myrdal (1944) believed this feeling of guilt, which plays on the social conscience of most U.S. citizens, reduces prejudice and discrimination.

14. This phrase has two words of 11 & 8 letters.

_____ _____

Dr. Dale Titus

PREJUDICE REDUCTION JIGSAW

Answer Key

1. Banks (1994) found that students show less prejudice when they are able to reason at a high level and use critical thinking.

2. Research reported by Byrnes (1988) revealed that children who enter vicariously into the lives of people of different ethnic groups tend to develop a flexibility of perspective and a feeling of empathy.

3. Studies by Stephan (1985) reported that students who engaged in role play activities of racially different persons developed more positive racial attitudes.

4. Fisher (1965) and Yawkey (1973) found that reading positive multiethnic literature improved student attitudes toward people from many different ethnic groups.

5. Williams and Edwards (1969) reduced white bias by giving positive reinforcement to students who used positive adjectives to describe brown figures.

6. Lichter and Johnson (1969) discovered that white elementary students, after using multiethnic curriculum materials in school, had more positive attitudes toward people of color.

7. Shirley (1988) reported that multicultural activities affected student attitudes toward diversity in a positive way.

8. When high expectations are communicated clearly, consistently, and sincerely for all students, attitudes toward diversity can be improved (Vaughn, 1996).

9. Research by Rubin (1967) indicates that increases in self-acceptance for an individual are associated with a reduction in prejudice.

10. Katz and Zalk (1978) discovered that a facial differentiation activity for persons who were racially different reduced prejudice and increased interracial contact.

11. Banks (1994) believes that students become more tolerant of diversity when required to defend their beliefs by relating them to democratic values such as liberty, justice, and equality.

12. Myrdal (1944) identified American Creed values, expressed in the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence, as basic beliefs for most Americans.

13. Myrdal (1944) believed the American Dilemma, a moral dilemma caused by the gap between social realities and democratic ideals, reduces prejudice and discrimination.

14. Among diverse student participants in cooperative learning Slavin (1990) found more interaction, greater mutual concern, and acceptance of students with disabilities.

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